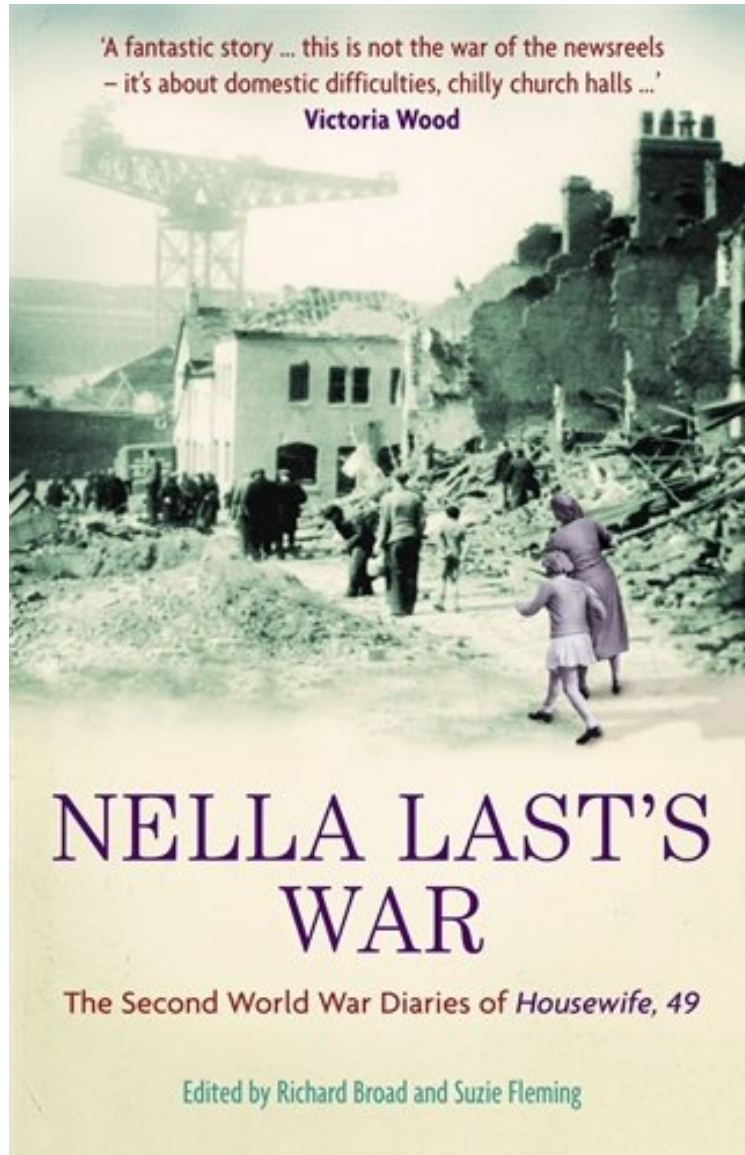


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## Nella Last's War: The Second World War Diaries of Housewife, 49

*Nella Last*

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**Nella Last : Nella Last's War: The Second World War Diaries of Housewife, 49** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Nella Last's War: The Second World War Diaries of Housewife, 49:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. A Fascinating Glimpse into the Home FrontBy PetsoundsI read a lot about World War II, but I've never read anything quite like this diary, written by a scrappy middle-aged housewife in

northern England, not for publication, but as part of a project in which several hundred women were asked to keep diaries to document daily life during the war. Nella Last's story is fascinating in its details, sometimes startling, of what it was like to try to keep home and family and community functioning normally during the war. Nella lived in a small city unfortunately adjacent to a major shipyard, so the town suffered bombings and extensive destruction and loss of life. Yet every day, she got up, assembled tasty meals out of her unbelievably meager rations, kept chickens, sewed and knitted for soldiers and evacuees, cooked food in a soldiers' canteen, ran a second-hand shop to benefit the Red Cross, and wrote long letters to her two sons. She did all of this without any modern conveniences--no fridge, central heating, dishwasher, computer, and eventually no car--but with much worry and anxiety, which she worked hard to conceal from those around her. I'm sure that thousands of other Englishwomen did the same, but I doubt that many of them could write as descriptively and touchingly as Nella Last. She says in her diary that she had always wanted to be writer. She was. This diary is a gem--a window into a kind of courage and pluck that is hard to imagine these days.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. I felt like a boiled owl this morning  
By cappy 245I felt like a boiled owl this morning. I am not wild about night fire watching as she goes on to describe about all the bombing that surrounded her last night. If you want a very clear picture of what it was like to live through the Second World War in England this is the book that will give you the sights, the smells and the very fear of what it was like to live through those days. The fear of not only losing your own life, but the lives of your family, your friends, and the soldiers that fought so bravely to protect them. The fear of losing your country was even more of a fear. This is the first of her Diaries . The second one was Nella Last's Peace the Post Far- War Diaries of Housewife #49, and Nella Last's in the 1950: The Further Diaries of Housewife number 49. She had always aspired to be a writer, but family pressures took over. She is indeed a terrific writer for she says more in just a few sentences than many of the history writers who just drone on and on. I can not tell you how thrilled I am to have discovered her writings. You will not be sorry if you buy her book for it will be a keepsake that you will not want let go of. Cappy2455 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Unexpectely wonderful  
By Karen J.I knew nothing of the Mass Observation program in England during the Second World War. This is as valuable a primary history source for Britain during World War II as the Slave Narratives are in the USA. Good reading, and fun, too. Lots of unexpected insights.

In September 1939, housewife and mother Nella Last began a diary whose entries, in their regularity, length and quality, have created a record of the Second World War which is powerful, fascinating and unique. When war broke out, Nella's younger son joined the army while the rest of the family tried to adapt to civilian life. Writing each day for the "Mass Observation" project, Nella, a middle-aged housewife from the bombed town of Barrow, shows what people really felt during this time. This was the period in which she turned 50, saw her children leave home, and reviewed her life and her marriage - which she eventually compares to slavery. Her growing confidence as a result of her war work makes this a moving (though often comic) testimony, which, covering sex, death and fear of invasion, provides a new, unglamorised, female perspective on the war years. 'Next to being a mother, I'd have loved to write books.' Oct 8, 1939

"I adored [it]. An extraordinary glimpse into the heart of an 'ordinary' woman, Nella Last's day-to-day account of her war is spirited, poignant and utterly compelling."  
?Lucy Moore  
"A fantastic story... This is not the war of the newsreels? it's about tiny domestic difficulties, lumpy custard..."  
?Victoria Wood  
"I relished it... her personality is so powerful... There are so many things to admire about her."  
?Margaret Forster  
Sunday Times UK  
"Anyone who has the least curiosity about what it was like to live through the Second World War should read this" -New Statesman  
"The whole post-war women's movement anticipated and rehearsed by a solitary pioneer on the most unlikely of stages"  
?Guardian UK